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REPORT TO SENIORS**

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Prescription Drug Bill Finally Passes

After several years of hard work, we finally passed legislation in Washington to make prescription drugs more affordable for low-income seniors. I was proud to champion the historic reforms, which include:

- Creating a new 'preferred drug' list to help the state to buy the most effective medicines at the best prices-saving taxpayers over \$10 million a year. (Work has started).
- Allowing nearly 600,000 lower-income seniors to join a buyers' club that gets the same bulk-discount savings on prescription drugs the state will get. (Starts next April).
- Launching a toll-free 'Pharmacy Connection Line' to help seniors and others find prescription-drug discounts they may be eligible for. (Starts in January).

I will support the funding necessary in 2004 to ensure help gets to people as soon as possible. I've also written federal officials to urge adding a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.



Reducing Property Taxes for Seniors

I believe we should provide additional property tax relief for seniors and disabled retirees.

The \$30,000 income ceiling that determines eligibility for relief hasn't been increased in over five years-the longest period without an increase since voters created the program over 25 years ago. My legislative proposal would:

1. Increase income ceilings for senior property-tax relief by \$5,000 (to \$35,000).
2. Let seniors deduct health insurance costs and veterans' disability payments when calculating eligibility for senior tax relief.
3. Allow deductions for assisted living costs and adult boarding homes - this is fair since nursing home costs can already be deducted.

To find out if you are currently eligible for the property-tax exemption or deferral, you can contact the King County Assessor at (206) 296-7300.



"Strong action is needed now to address this crisis in long term care."

-Washington Senior Citizens' Lobby

Preserving the Choice of Care in Your Home

If you need long-term care, would you rather get it in your own home or in a nursing home? Most seniors prefer home care. So do taxpayers, because it's much less expensive than institutional care.

I strongly believe that senior citizens should be able to receive long-term care in their own homes if they choose.

The challenge is that there are not enough qualified home care workers willing to do this demanding work for low pay and no benefits. That's why I voted to honor the people's will on Initiative 753, which required competitive wages and benefits for home care workers. Unfortunately, the Legislature failed to fully implement the initiative, so I will continue to push to make sure skilled home care workers are available when people need them.

"After I pay my taxes and medical expenses, not much is left."

-SeaTac senior asking Dave to support tax relief.